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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [UNHRC](#) [AORC](#) [UN](#) [IT](#)
SUBJECT: ITALY CANDIDATURE - HRC

¶1. (U) U.S. Mission Geneva received a diplomatic note from the Permanent Mission of Italy requesting U.S. Government support for the Italian candidature to the Human Rights Council at elections to be held in the United Nations General Assembly in May 2007.

¶2. (U) Mission has responded that the information contained in the note has been forwarded to the appropriate authorities of the USG for their attention.

¶3. (U) A copy of the diplomatic note has been e-mailed to IO/UNP, IO-RHS, L-HRR.

¶4. (U) Begin text:
Prot. 0-0078
12 JAN 2007

The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva and has the honour to inform that Italy has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the three-year term 2007-2010 (elections to be held in May 2007).

Resolution 251 of the General Assembly of 15 March 2006 has established the Human Rights Council, creating an historic opportunity to improve the effectiveness and strength of the human rights protection system within the United Nations. Italy believes that its membership in the Council will contribute to better respond to the Council's task of promoting universal respect for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, addressing violations and making recommendations according to the principles of universality, impartiality and objectivity through constructive international dialogue and cooperation.

Human Rights in Italy and in Italian Foreign Policy

Italy has a long and rooted domestic tradition of respect and advancement of human rights and fundamental freedoms, as proved by its history and its legal culture. Recent developments in the international debate confirm the increasing importance attached to the protection of human rights throughout the world, a key element in foreign policy for our country. Italy considers respect for human rights to be crucial to ensure peace, prevent conflict and foster the growth of stable societies worldwide: the focus of our international action lies therefore with the promotion of democracy and fundamental rights in multilateral fora, mainly within the United Nations.

Promoting and protecting human rights throughout the world is therefore crucial to Italian foreign policy, as demonstrated by the very active role played by Italy as member of the previous Commission on Human Rights, where Italy has sat almost uninterruptedly since 1957, and during the negotiations which have finally led to the establishment of the new Human Rights Council.

Italy and the United Nations

Italy has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council since it intends to keep playing a dynamic role in the field of the protection of Human Rights, by actively contributing to increase the effectiveness and coordination of the Council's actions. Italy believes that the United Nations is the principal forum of action in the sphere of human rights, and that the Human Rights Council can and must be the key player. As a member of the UN Peace building Commission, Italy will also support technical cooperation programmes in the field of the rule of law, aimed at fostering stable democratic societies.

Italy has acquired consistent experience as a committed member of the Commission on Human Rights for several mandates, and has fully cooperated with the Commission's Special Procedures. In line with an EU decision, Italy has addressed the UN Special Rapporteurs an open invitation to visit the country and conduct their investigations at any time. Consequently, Italy has received the visit of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the independence of judges and lawyers, Param Cumaraswamy, in two occasions in 2002, the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Ambeyi Ligabo, (October 2004), the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the right of migrants, Gabriela Rodriguez Pizarro (June 2004) and the visit of Italy the UN Special Rapporteur on racism and xenophobia, Doudou Diene (September 2006).

International Framework for the protection of Human Rights in Italy

Italy adheres to six major UN Conventions for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and to most of their Optional Protocols.

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1978)
- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1978) and the Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR (1995)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1978)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985)
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1989)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (2000)
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1976)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002)
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children child prostitution and child pornography (2002)

In terms of monitoring of their implementation and cooperation with the Treaty Bodies, Italy has a very good record of returning national reports under UN Conventions in full and on time.

Italy supports the International Criminal Tribunals and hosted in Rome in 1998 the United Nations conference which established the International Criminal Court - the so-called "Rome Statute".

Moreover, Italy fully cooperates with the High Commissioner of Human Rights and its Office in an effective and fruitful way.

At regional level, Italy is a member of the Council of Europe and OSCE, and it adheres to the European Convention on the safeguard of

Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its additional Protocols.

Italy traditionally supports all the initiatives in the framework of the European Union - monitoring, demarches, structured dialogues, technical cooperation, presentation of draft Resolutions and several others - aiming at the promotion and protection of human rights worldwide. On the initiative of the last Italian Presidency of the European Union, in December 2003 the EU adopted a set of Guidelines on children involved in armed conflicts and the 5th edition of the EU Forum on human rights was organized in Rome, on the issue of protection of children in international law.

Italy devotes in fact special attention to specific issues in the field of human rights such as rights of the children, but also gender equality and rights of people with disabilities. Italy supports, among others, the UN bodies and agencies of UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNIFEM, WHO and FAO, attributing particular importance to development cooperation and its link with basic rights. With specific reference to gender equality, for instance, the Italian development cooperation invests in programs of decentralised cooperation, which consist of starting and favouring interventions at local level for the empowerment of women along the lines of UN Agencies, aiming at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In accordance with Resolution 251 of the General Assembly of 15 March 2006, Italy submits hereby an Aide Memoire on a specific set of voluntary pledges and commitments it is ready to undertake, in order to further improve its long term commitment towards the promotion and protection of human rights.

Italy would be most grateful for the support of United Nations member States for its candidature to the Human Rights Council.

The Permanent Mission of Italy avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 12 January 2007
Permanent Missions to the United Nations Office and other
International Organizations
GENEVA

Aide memoire

ITALIAN CANDIDATURE TO THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

Voluntary Pledges and Commitments under Resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations A/RES/60/251

Having submitted its candidacy to the Human Rights Council of the United Nations, Italy engages to continue to strive for the highest standards of human rights and to fully cooperate with the UN system in order to make it increasingly effective, both within the Human Rights Council and the other relevant UN bodies, in particular the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Agencies and Programmes.

Hence, Italy's efforts towards the strengthening of the HRC system within the UN will be focused on the following pledges and commitments.

In the United Nations and internationally, Italy will:

Work in the most cooperative way with the Human Rights Council and all the mechanisms that will be established under it

Strive to enhance the relevance and the effectiveness of thematic action in different sets of countries, in order to keep international focus on specific relevant human rights issues

Contribute to improve the membership of the HRC through encouraging States with good human rights records to apply for membership.

Support the work of the Special Procedures which will be established by the Human Rights Council.

Encourage Third Countries to report more frequently and extensively

to the UN Treaty Bodies, follow up the TB recommendations, and invite and accept visits of the UN Special Procedures.

Combat impunity, including by promoting the universalization of signatures and ratifications of the Statute of the International Criminal Court. In particular, Italy strives to promote the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms worldwide, with special focus on some issues of particular concern, namely:

Promoting the rule of law and strengthening of democracy by, inter alia

- Keeping its support to electoral observation missions and follow-up in countries in transition or not fully developed democracies.

- Strengthening Parliaments, political parties, civil society and other democratic institutions, with special focus on strengthening justice systems, in countries in post-conflict or transition situation, through specific training.

- Protection of children's rights, especially children involved in armed conflicts, by, inter alia

- Keeping a high profile both of political initiatives and cooperation programmes, especially through cooperation with and support to UNICEF.

- Contrast to xenophobia, racism and all forms of discrimination by, inter alia

- Promoting increased support of resolutions against racism, xenophobia and all forms of discrimination presented at the HRC, highlighting in particular specific actions needed in order to eliminate any form of discrimination

- Combating torture by, inter alia

- Increasing the number of countries that have ratified and that implement the Convention Against Torture (CAT)

- Combating gender-based discrimination by, inter alia

- Promoting concrete actions for preventing and combating violence against women and international trafficking of human beings

- Abolition of the death penalty by, inter alia

- Striving for the increase of the number of abolitionist countries, eventually requesting countries not willing to abolish yet the death penalty to apply a moratorium as an intermediate objective

Domestically, Italy is preparing the adaptation/adjustment of its legislation in order to:

- Complete the normative process for the implementation of the Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC);

- Achieve ratification and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (OPCAT);

- Establish the National Independent Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

- End text.

Tichenor